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HUMAN EVENTS
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Conservative Political Action Conference

Conservatives Gather for 13th Annual CPAC

By GENE TARNE

"The 1990s and Beyond" was the theme of the 13th annual Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), sponsored by the American Conservative Union and Young Americans for Freedom in cooperation with HUMAN EVENTS and *National Review*. The convention, held at the Washington Hilton, January 30–February 1, reflected the continuing momentum of conservative ideas and programs among the American people.

The numbers alone gave witness to this momentum: 54 organizations officially participated in this year's convention, a substantial increase over last year's total of 29. The number of registered participants rose from 600 last year to a record 800 this year. Although there were a number of speeches and panels on economics and social issues, the thrust of this year's meeting was decidedly international: This year's CPAC belonged to the world's anti-Communist insurgents, the freedom fighters.

This emphasis could not have come at a more opportune time, as Congress will again be considering aid to the Afghan, Nicaraguan and Angolan freedom fighters, aid which could be essential in bringing about a rollback of the Soviet Empire. Sensing that the time had come when such a rollback was possible, conservatives kept the cause of the freedom fighters at the center of debate. Almost every speaker made some reference to the anti-Communist insurgents, while posters and buttons saying "Free Afghanistan," and "Aid to Savimbi" could be seen everywhere.

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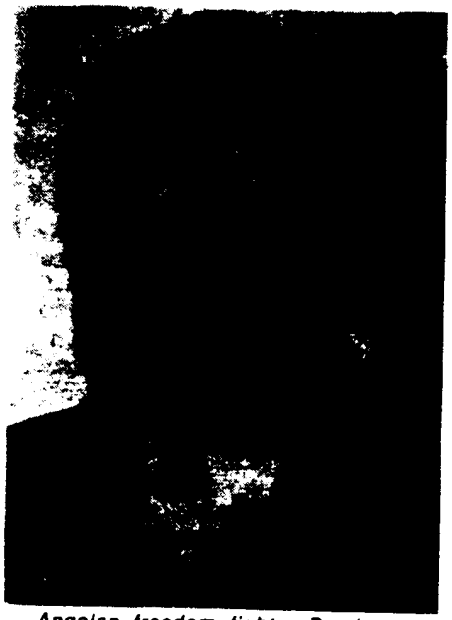
The panel which followed Meese's address, chaired by *National Review* Publisher William Rusher and featuring Latislav Bittman, former Czechoslovakian diplomat and intelligence officer, Donald Jameson, former CIA official, and Zdislaw Rurarz, former Polish ambassador to Japan and intelligence officer, considered the problem of internal security in relation to espionage, terrorism and disinformation.

On the subject of terrorism, Bittman agreed with Rurarz, who stated that



Angolan freedom fighter Dr. Jonas Savimbi received this year's CPAC award.

"The Soviet Union and Soviet bloc nations are vitally interested in fostering terrorism, but they are not *directly* involved in the planning of most terrorist operations." Jameson concurred, but added that some organizations, such as the African National Congress (ANC) and certain Colombian and Puerto Rican terrorist groups were "Soviet creatures from beginning to end." Jameson further defended the CIA from charges of moral equivalence with the Soviet KGB: "The KGB is incommensurable with anything in a free country. It exists to prevent public opinion, whether from inside or out, from influencing the Soviet leaders from doing whatever they want."

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As Savimbi came forward to receive his award from Ambassador Kirkpatrick, the audience came to its feet with chants of "UNITA, UNITA."

Savimbi began his talk by offering condolences to the American people over the seven who died in the space shuttle tragedy.

He thanked President Reagan for seeing him, saying "that act alone, in itself represents a boost of morale to the soldiers of freedom at home."

Then, addressing his critics, Savimbi said: "People want to discourage you from supporting UNITA.... They tell you I am a Marxist because I studied in Red China.... I did not go to China to learn communism. I am not a Communist, I am a Christian, a Protestant."

"Now I am being criticized for my connection with South Africa. On one side I am a Communist, on the other a puppet of apartheid, and always I am CIA. I am Jonas Savimbi, I am Angolan, and I want my people to be able to decide for themselves."

"I don't approve of apartheid. How can I as a black man approve of apartheid?... I am against apartheid, but it is a very difficult situation in South Africa.... Let us help them to solve that problem. The [U.S. Congressional] Black Caucus doesn't want to talk to me, but I want to talk. Why do they not give me a chance to explain what is in my heart?

"They say free African nations do not support me. That is a lie. There are many leaders willing to support me. African countries do not like apartheid, but they also don't want Cubans and Soviets in Angola."

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Mr. Tarne, a graduate of the National Journalism Center, is a Washington-based free-lance writer.

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